

Emergency Preparedness

Costa Rica is prone to several natural disasters, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and land/mud slides. Developing an emergency plan with your family and preparing your residence for such emergencies is each individual's responsibility. This document includes basic information on the following:

- Home Disaster Kits
- Earthquakes

HOME DISASTER KITS

You should stock your home with supplies that may be needed during the emergency period. An extensive list of suggested kit items can be found at www.ready.gov. At a minimum, your emergency kit should include:

- Several clean containers for water, large enough for a 3–5 day supply of water (about five gallons for each person).
- A 3–5 day supply of non-perishable food.
- A first aid kit.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlights and extra batteries.
- Prescription medicines and needs for special medical conditions.
- Baby food and/or prepared formula, diapers and other baby supplies.
- Disposable cleaning cloths, such as “baby wipes” for the whole family to use in case bathing facilities are not available.
- Personal hygiene supplies, such as soap, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, etc.
- An emergency kit for your car with food, flares, jumper cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.

EARTHQUAKES

Below are some basic steps to consider in preparing your family for an earthquake:

- Choose a safe place in every room—under a sturdy table or desk or against an inside wall where nothing can fall on you.
- Practice COVER AND HOLD ON at least twice a year. Drop under a sturdy desk or table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit on the floor against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you. Teach children to COVER AND HOLD ON!
- Prepare written instructions for how to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- Inform domestic staff, babysitters and caregivers of safe places in your residence and your earthquake plan.

What to do when the shaking begins:

- COVER AND HOLD ON!
- Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit. Stay away from windows. In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake.
- If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. If there are tall bookcases or other furniture items that could fall on you, move to a safe place.
- If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.
- If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place (as described above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

What to do after the shaking stops:

- Check yourself for injuries. Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves.
- Check others for injuries. Give first aid for serious injuries.
- Look for and extinguish small fires. Eliminate fire hazards. Turn off the gas if you smell gas or think it is leaking.
- Tune into your radio or local television for updates.
- Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one COVER AND HOLD ON!
- Inspect your home for damage. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe.
- Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies.